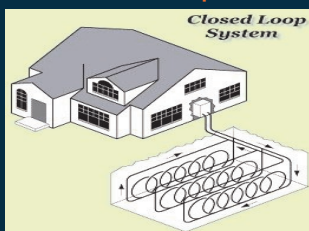


The Civic Green

The Mysterious Workings of a Geothermal Heat Pump



The real mystery is why geothermal heat pumps are not used more in Morgan Hill. A heat pump uses your backyard to heat *and cool* your home. How can this be? It turns out that under a few feet of the earth's surface, the ground remains a pretty constant temperature. Ever been in a cave in the summer? The air underground is a constant, cooler temperature than the outside air. During the winter, the same constant cave temperature is warmer than the air outside. That is the principle behind geothermal heat pumps. In the winter, they move heat from the earth into your house.

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Share Your "Green" Heart This Valentine's Day

Cards, chocolate and flowers are great ways to show that you care about friends, family and of course that someone special on Valentine's Day, but did you know there are also some easy ways to give a "green" hearted gift or experience? You can explore a restaurant, shop or hiking trail that's new to you to create a one-of-a-kind experience or consider one of these other six Eco-Valentine's tips:

Buy Local

Buy locally cut flowers from a grower. When you buy from a local grower you get the freshest, longest-lasting flowers for that special someone. Better yet, say no to fresh cut flowers! Instead, buy potted flowers or plant your own rose bush and make it a family plant that everyone can love. (Sarah Newman, *The Huffington Post*)
Jewelry can have an effect on the environment, depending on how and where it was mined. Check first with your local jewelers on fair-trade or conflict free diamonds to ensure that the materials were mined sustainably. (Valarie Williams; *The Green Muse*)

Don't forget about local wines and other products that are made in or near Morgan Hill.

Think Organic

Buy organic roses or flowers, as they do not contain pesticides or herbicides. Google the process for making your own organic candles. Share the experience with your Valentine or friends! Often made with earth-friendly beeswax or soy, you can even personalize your candles with your own color. Candles made with soy and pure essential oils will still tickle your senses without allowing the toxins found in many store bought candles into your home. (Soy Candles; *The Daily Green*)
Also, buy organic or fair trade chocolate for your fondue or traditional box-of-chocolates. Organic wine or champagne will taste great and leave you and your sweetie talking about these eco-friendly treats.



Buy Recycled

Cut down on virgin materials when showing your affection to someone special. Send an e-card! Or purchase a recycled card or a tree-free paper product. Buy items with less packaging and/or made of recycled content.

In the summer, they pull the heat from your home and discharge it into the ground. Not so mysterious after all.

EPA studies show that 70 percent of the energy used in a geothermal heat pump system is renewable energy from the ground. Because Morgan Hill is located in a moderate climate zone, the savings from geothermal heat pumps can be maximized. Initially, they are costly to install, but they can lower your heating and cooling costs 30 to 40 percent, and there is a \$1,500 tax credit available. Next time you are out in your front or back yard, think of all that renewable energy underneath your feet that you could be using if you only had a geothermal heat pump.

Join the next Carbon Diet Club In February

In just 3 meetings, learn how to reduce your carbon footprint. Upcoming classes are:

- **Tuesdays**, 2/9-2/23 from 6:30-7:30pm
- **Saturdays**, 2/20-3/6 from 10-11am
- **Thursdays**, 2/11-2/25 from 6:30-7:30pm

Held at the Centennial Recreation Center. Call 782-2128 to pre-register. Child-care is available.

Plan an Eco-Trip

You can skip the purchase of stuff altogether without sacrificing the romance. Inspire memories by finding local treasures and doing things together. Show your spontaneity by visiting a local winery, taking a bike ride with a picnic or try out indoor rock climbing. When traveling near or far, taking the train can allow for great scenery this time of year. This is a lot cheaper than traveling by plane or car and an efficient way to cut your carbon emissions. If you do book a hotel, ask if they are part of an eco-friendly program. You can feel better knowing that the hotel takes extra steps to ensure your special day is easy on the environment.

Home Delights - Eat in Season

If you prefer a more traditional Valentine's celebration, a movie and dinner is simple, warm and heartfelt. A home-made meal made with local ingredients (preferably a vegetarian meal) will spice up the night, not your budget. Make homemade



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cookies together or snack on almonds and walnuts which are in season. Fresh veggies that are in season include potatoes, beans, avocados, leeks, spinach, chard, carrots, squash, mushrooms and turnips. Try in season sliced apples, kiwi and pears for chocolate dipping instead of the traditional strawberries. (*Natural Resources Defense Council*)

The Gift of Service

Massages, a day at the spa or other service type gift cards are available. Or, explore your creative side and make your own coupons! Cut out a heart and insert five arrows which contain a promise to do a different chore like: making dinner, preparing a bubble bath, making a surprise dessert, etc.



No More Bins

Don't forget! Your recycling driver will no longer empty the small, open-topped blue or green bins. If you have any of the small recycle bins, you may reuse them for storage or other projects around your home. If you do not want to keep your bin, just set it out on your recycling day starting February 1st. If you need a wheeled recycling cart, call Recology at 842-3358.

This Month's Green Living Tip:

Save Money and be an Energy Hero!

It's so easy! If you haven't already, try these low cost home energy improvements.

Find the Efficient Lights in Life. Switch 90% of your lighting to compact fluorescent or LED and save over \$100 and 1,500 lbs of greenhouse gas emissions. **Got Fans?** Ceiling fans can be switched into reverse to help circulate heat in rooms. **Wrap it Up.** Wrapping insulating blankets around older water heaters and insulating



hot water pipes helps reduce heat loss.

Homes with Cold Feet.

Most homes built before 1980 don't have insulation underneath the flooring. If you have a crawlspace, insulate underneath your floor. Installing insulation at \$1.00 per square foot will payback in about 4-6 years from all the energy savings.

Purchase a Kill-A-Watt.

Find those appliances using energy when they are not turned on.



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